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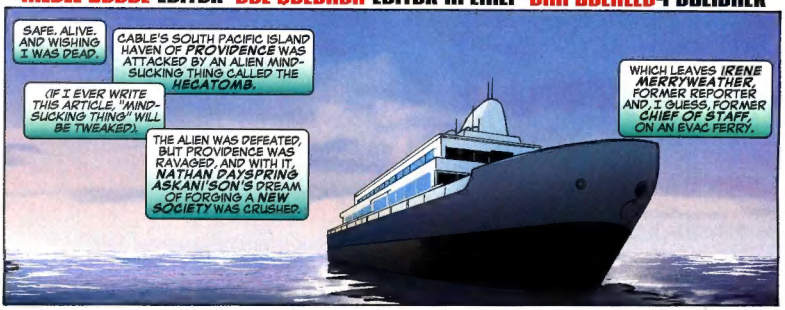
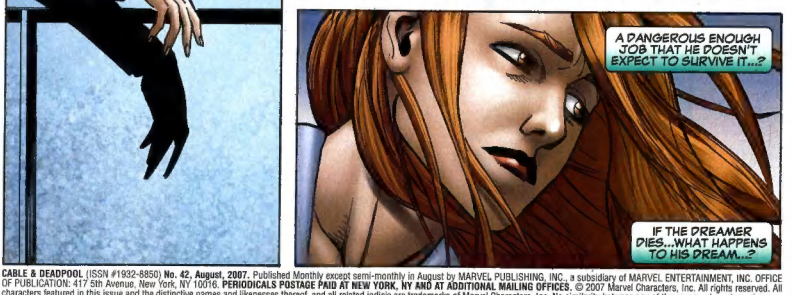

SAFE. ALIVE. AND WISHING I WAS DEAD.
CABLE'S SOUTH PACIFIC ISLAND HAVEN OF PROVIDENCE WAS ATTACKED BY AN ALIEN MIND-SUCKING THING CALLED THE HECATOMB.
(IF I EVER WRITE THIS ARTICLE, "MIND-SUCKING THING" WILL BE TWEAKED).
THE ALIEN WAS DEFEATED, BUT PROVIDENCE WAS RAVAGED, AND WITH IT, NATHAN DAYSPRING ASKANI'SON'S DREAM OF FORGING A NEW SOCIETY WAS CRUSHED.
WHICH LEAVES IRENE MERRYWEATHER, FORMER REPORTER AND, I GUESS, FORMER CHIEF OF STAFF, ON AN EVAC FERRY.

NATE STAYED BEHIND WITH WADE WILSON, THE MERC WITH A MOUTH CALLED DEADPOOL.
THEY NEEDED TO SECURE THE ISLAND'S INFORMATION ARCHIVES TO PREVENT ANYONE FROM ACCESSING HIS FUTURE TECHNOLOGY.



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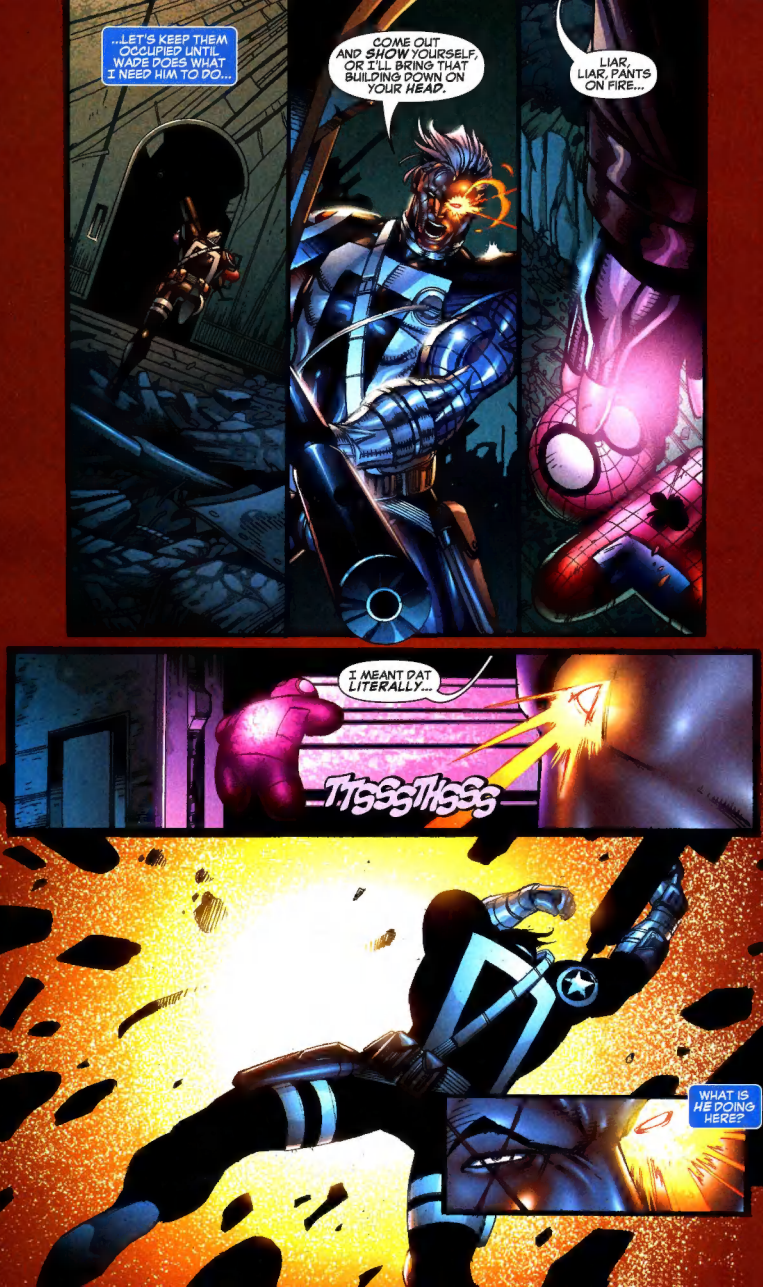
"IT ALWAYS SEEMED LIKE THE FIGHTING WOULD NEVER END.
"IT WAS OUR FOURTH DAY IN DEFENSE OF OUR TRANSPORT HUB. THE LINE WASN'T GOING TO HOLD MUCH LONGER.
"THE MUTATES, COURTESY OF APOCALYPSE'S TWISTED MECHAGENICS LABS, KEPT COMING AT US IN ENDLESS WAVES.
"WE HAD SUCCESSFULLY EVACUATED ALL CIVILIANS FROM THE UNDERGROUND SHELTERS.
"WE'D HELD THE LINE WHILE ALL THE TRANSPORT TUBES WERE SCUTTLED, EXCEPT THE ONE THAT WOULD EVACUATE US.
"THE LAST THING WE NEEDED TO DO--WHICH WAS TAKING THE LONGEST--WAS TO DELETE ALL THE PROGRAMMING FROM THE TRANSPORT MATRIX...
"...OTHERWISE, THEY'D SEE THE DESTINATION OF EVERY BODY-SLIDE WE'D MADE--AND KNOW THE LOCATIONS OF EVERY SHELTER THE RESISTANCE HAD.

"MAKING SURE THEY DIDN'T GET THAT INFORMATION WAS WORTH THE COST OF OUR LIVES.
"THAT'S THE PRICE WE WERE WILLING TO PAY.
"AND AT THAT POINT, IT LOOKED LIKE THE BILL WAS DUE.
"I ORDERED THEM INTO THE TUBES--TOLD THEM TO BODYSLIDE AWAY.
"I WAS GOING TO DETONATE THE PLASMA CHARGES ON MY RIFLE--THE RESULTING EXPLOSION WOULD CRATER THE MATRIX ARCHIVES.
"I FULLY PLANNED TO SACRIFICE MYSELF, BUT ONE OF MY SOLDIERS PROTESTED--SAID I WAS TOO IMPORTANT TO THE CAUSE--
"--AND TOOK THE DECISION OUT OF MY HANDS.
"SHE GENERATED AN OVERRIDE OF THE REFILL CHARGES ON HER PACK...THEY WOULD EXPLODE IN SECONDS...
"SHE SACRIFICED HERSELF FOR ME..."

...AND I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER HER NAME...
YOU JUST TOTALLY MADE UP THE WORD "MECHAGENICS," RIGHT?
YOU SAY SOME-ONE'S ALREADY ON THE ISLAND LOOKIN' TO SCAVENGE YOUR DATA ARCHIVES--
--AND YOU WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN EVEN IF IT MEANS KILLIN' YOURSELF...?
I SAY WE TAKE 'EM OUT BEFORE IT GETS TO THAT!
DEAD
UNFORTUNATELY, I CAN'T GO ON THE HUNT WITH YOU.
I HAVE TO ENCRYPT AS MUCH INFORMATION FROM THE DATA ARCHIVES AS I CAN--
BEFORE YOU HAVE TO BLOW IT ALL UP? OKAY. HEY, LOOKIN' A BIT SHAKY THERE, NATE.
MY MUTANT POWERS RETURNED WHEN I ACCEPTED AN ALIEN PARASITE INTO MY BODY.
WHEN IT DIED, MY RESTORED TELEPATHY WAS SHUT DOWN.
IT SEEMS MY TELEKINESIS IS SLOWLY FADING NOW, TOO...
SO I WATCH YOUR BACK WHILE YOU DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.
WON'T WORK. THE PEOPLE WHO'VE INFILTRATED THE ISLAND DON'T KNOW ABOUT MY BACKUP BYPASS.
YOUR BACKUP BY-PASS?
I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S BEEN DAMAGED. I NEED YOU TO RETRIEVE IT-- KEEP IT SAFE.
IT'S THE ONE ACE WE HAVE UP OUR SLEEVE...

OKAY, WHERE'S THIS BACKUP?
MY APARTMENT. TROPHY CASE THREE. INSIDE THE SOUVENIR MAQUETTE OF ANTON KRUTCH.
SLY DOG.
WADE...
DO NOT SAY THANK YOU.
DO NOT SAY YOU'RE PROUD OF ME.
DO NOT SAY GOOD-BYE.
YOUR ZIPPER IS DOWN.
MADE YOU LOOK.
YOU ARE SO IMMATURE...

THANK YOU.
I'M PROUD OF YOU.
GOOD-BYE.
WAKE UP, PROFESSOR.
I'M REINSTATING ELECTRICAL CONDUITS IN WHAT WAS FOUNTAIN-HEAD PLAZA. I NEED YOU TO VERIFY THE CONNECTIONS.
AFFIRMATIVE, NATHAN.
PROFESSOR IS A COPY OF THE ORIGINAL SENTIENT PROGRAM THAT RAISED ME.
IF THE DATA ARCHIVES ARE ERASED, THE LAST LINK I HAVE TO IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DESTROYED. SENTIMENTAL AND KIND OF STUPID, I KNOW...
...BUT I FIGURED IF HE WAS GOING TO BE DELETED, BETTER TO GO DOWN AT MY SIDE, OR INSIDE MY HEAD. WHICHEVER.
TIME.
THIRTY-FIVE HOURS, THIRTY-SIX MINUTES, FOURTEEN SECONDS OF POWER REMAINING.
AND THEN WHAT'S LEFT OF THE ISLAND SINKS INTO THE OCEAN. PLENTY OF TIME TO ENCRYPT OR DELETE THE ARCHIVES...UNFORTUNATELY...
...THAT'S PLENTY OF TIME FOR MY GUESTS TO STOP ME, TOO...


...LET'S KEEP THEM OCCUPIED UNTIL WADE DOES WHAT I NEED HIM TO DO...
COME OUT AND SHOW YOURSELF, OR I'LL BRING THAT BUILDING DOWN ON YOUR HEAD.
LIAR, LIAR, PANTS ON FIRE...
I MEANT DAT LITERALLY...
TTSSSTHSSS
WHAT IS HE DOING HERE?

HEY, NATE.
NICE DAY T'DIE, ISN' IT...?
REMY LEBEAU. GAMBIT. FORMER THIEF. FORMER MEMBER OF THE X-MEN. FORMER HORSEMAN OF THE APOCALYPSE. CURRENT BUTTHOLE.
HIS MUTANT POWER IS TO KINETICALLY CHARGE INANIMATE OBJECTS UNTIL THEY DETONATE.
HIS NON-MUTANT POWER IS TO ANNOY EVERYONE HE MEETS.
WHY HE'S HERE AND WHO HE'S WORKING WITH, I DON'T KNOW.
I ALSO DON'T CARE.
WHAT I DO KNOW IS...I'M ANNOYED...

...I WAS HOPING FOR A BETTER WORKOUT...
OKAY... TROPHY CASE THREE...LES'SEE... TONY ROBERTS MOTIVATIONAL-SPEAKER TAPES...
...THE COLIN FIRTH DVD COLLECTION...
...AUTOGRAPHED PICTURE OF HOWIE LONG...
...WHY DOESN'T HE HAVE A GIANT PENNY IN HERE...?
AH! HERE'S THE LITTLE SO-AND-SO. REMEMBER WHEN YOU TRIED TO ELIMINATE RACIAL PREJUDICE BY TURNING EVERYONE BLUE? GOOD TIMES.
FWWITHTH
HEY, WHAT'S GOING ON? IT'S NOT THURSDAY...
OW.
HEY.
OW.

HEY! IT'S SENYAKA FROM SRI LANKA! FORMER ACOLYTE WITH ENERGY-BASED WHIPS. WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING HERE?
YOU GOT THE BESTEST WHIPS EVER, BUT YOU PROBABLY KNOW THAT, HUH?
ARE THE ACOLYTES THE ONES ATTACKING THE ISLAND? COLOR ME NOT SURPRISED.
YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN THE ARCH-NEMESISISIS OF MY FELLOW X-MEN FOR MANY A MOON.
OKAY. YOU HAVEN'T. JUST WANTED YOU TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF BEFORE I KICKED YOUR ASS IN.
NOW GIVE ME THAT STATUE! IT HAS RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE, YOU KNOW.
VERY HOLY. PROPHETIC, YOU MIGHT SAY. REVELATORY EVEN.
YOU GET WHAT I'M HINTIN' AT HERE? I KNOW YOU DO, SENYAKA-DABBA-DO. RIGHT?
WILL YOU SHUT UP?!
HA! GOTCHER GOAT!
OH, DRAT!
PLEASE, BY THE GRACE OF MY FORMER GLORY, LORD MAGNETO, PLEASE LET HIM BE DEAD...
...

HA!
MINE! MINE! ALL MINE!
PISMO BEACH, HERE I COME...
+GAAK+

AUGH
YA
YA
YA
YA
YA
OW
OW OW.
OW!
HEY, I CAN'T FLY HERE!
THWUMPH!
OF COURSE, YOU KNOW...
"...THIS MEANS WAR!"

I CAN'T REMEMBER HER NAME.
I'LL SHOW YOU A CARD TRICK INSTEAD.
NOT GOING TO HAPPEN, GAMBIT.
WELL, I SAID IT WAS A TRICK, CABLE...
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THE GREAT STRATEGIST, SUMMERS...
-GURGG-
HE SPITS OUT MY FATHER'S LAST NAME AS IF IT WERE A CURSE.
MAYBE IT IS.

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THEM? GAMBIT AND SUNFIRE WERE ALWAYS GRAY AREAS, AT BEST, BUT NOW...WHAT'S THEIR GAME?
BUT I SUPPOSE WE ALL BECOME COMPLACENT ON OUR HOME GROUND?
HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT, YOSHIDA...YOU IDIOT... NOTHING TO DO WITH THEM RIGHT NOW...OR EVEN ME...
START TO MISS THE OBVIOUS...
OBVIOUS...AS IN THE NAME OF A SOLDIER WHO SACRIFICED HER LIFE FOR YOURS...?
AN' I'FORGET THE FINE DETAILS.
TWO... ONE...
CHOOM CHOOM
"ZERO."
TEKE SHIELD BARELY BUFFERED ANY OF THAT--FEEL A FEW BONES GRINDING LIKE LOOSE GRAVEL...

GIVE ME THAT STATUE!
YOU CAN'T HAVE ALL THAT FUTURE INFO--THAT'S TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE FOR ANYONE TO HAVE--
--EXCEPT MAYBE KRESKIN--
--YOU'D KNOW TOO MUCH--WILL THE CUBS EVER WIN THE WORLD SERIES?
WILL BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY STOCK GO UP OR DOWN?
WHO WILL WIN DANCING WITH THE STARS IN 2010?
NATE KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING WHEN HE ENTRUSTED ME WITH IT--
--HE KNEW I'D ■ TOO STUPID TO LOOK FOR ANY IMPORTANT STUFF!
MUST...USE... SHATNER...VOICE... TO...REACH... STATUE...
...WAIT... IF... STATUE...WAS SO IMPORTANT...
...WHY WOULD NATE... EVER TRUST ME WITH IT...?

TSCHAAAK
I WAS HOPING THEY'D FOLLOW ME. HOPING THEY WOULD KNOW ENOUGH NOT TO FALL FOR THE BAIT AND CHASE AFTER WADE.
THE BEST WAY TO TAKE OUT YOUR OPPONENTS IS TO LEAD THEM EXACTLY TO WHAT IT IS YOU'RE TRYING TO PROTECT.
NOT ENOUGH TIME OR POWER TO ENCRYPT THE FILES.
CAN'T LET THEM HAVE THE DATACORE.
SO NOW IT COMES DOWN TO THIS: MAKE SURE YOU WIN EVEN WHEN YOU LOSE.
PROFESSOR. REQUIEM.

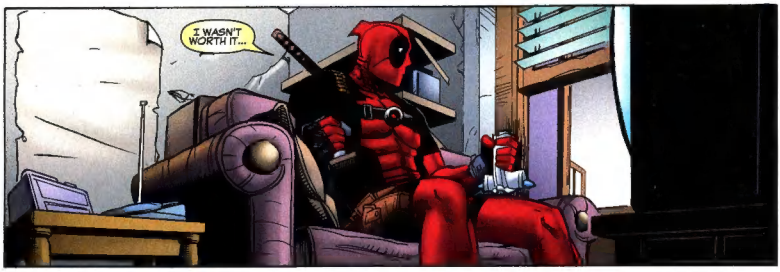
GOTCHA!
HUH?
TELEPORTATION MATRIX OMEGA ACTIVATED:
BODYSLIDE BY ONE:
NATE--YOU SON OF A--
YOU MAKE SURE...IF YOU'RE GOING TO SACRIFICE YOURSELF...YOU DO IT FOR SOMEONE--FOR SOMETHING--THAT MATTERS...

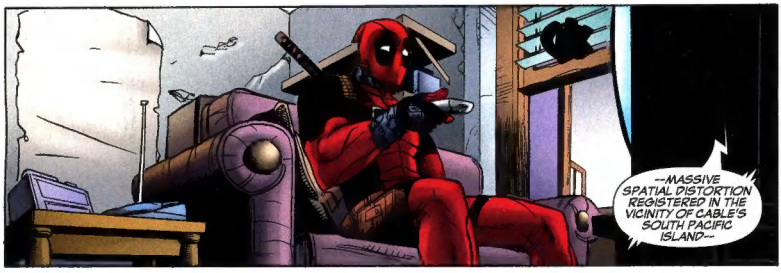
YOU SACRIFICE YOURSELF FOR A CAUSE. TO PROTECT YOUR MEN. YOUR LEADER.
TO PREVENT AN ENEMY FROM OBTAINING A WORTHWHILE TARGET.
MOVE!
THAT'S FUNNY...
... NOW I REMEMBER HER NAME.
VARRROOOOOOOM
YOU SACRIFICE YOURSELF TO KEEP YOUR DREAM FROM BECOMING CORRUPTED.
BUT MOST OF ALL...

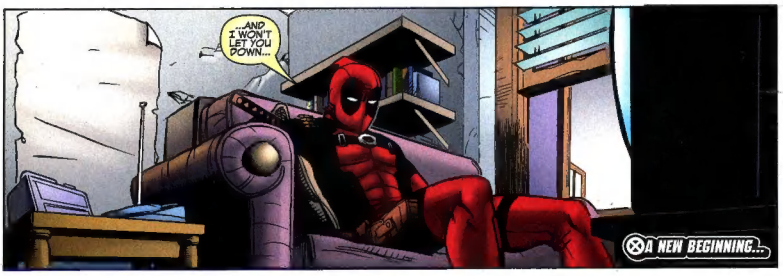
...YOU DO IT FOR THE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE WHO MATTER THE MOST...

NATE!
BODYSLIDE COMPLETED:

OMEGA MATRIX POWER SUPPLY: DEPLETED: ALL FUNCTIONS TERMINA--
DEAD
--CLIK


I WASN'T WORTH IT...


--MASSIVE SPATIAL DISTORTION REGISTERED IN THE VICINITY OF CABLE'S SOUTH PACIFIC ISLAND--


--AND I WON'T LET YOU DOWN...
A NEW BEGINNING...